

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE U. S. ARMY OFFICER CORPS: CHANGING WITH THE TIMES**

by

Lieutenant Colonel Carlen J. Chestang, Jr.  
United States Army

Colonel William Lee  
Project Adviser

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of strategic Studies degree. The U. S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of College and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

U.S. Army War College  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE <b>15 MAR 2006</b>		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-2005 to 00-00-2006</b>	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>U.S. Army Officer Corps Changing with the Times</b>				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) <b>Carlen Chestang</b>				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050</b>				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT <b>See attached.</b>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>24</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			



## **ABSTRACT**

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Carlen J. Chestang, Jr.  
TITLE: The U. S. Army Officer Corps: Changing With the Times  
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project  
DATE: 13 March 2006      WORD COUNT: 6734      PAGES: 24  
KEY TERMS: Diversity, Leadership, Challenges, Army Transformation  
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

What types of officers does the U. S. Army need to sustain the force, lead, manage resources, procure the best possible supplies and equipment, and operate in the field in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? From 1940s to the present, the U. S. Army officer ranks have confronted several difficult issues and complex changes. This SRP examines characteristics of the U. S. Army Officer Corps from past to present. It describes the diversity of the current officer corps, compares the pre–and post–Vietnam officer corps' and assesses effects of the post-Vietnam War drawdown. It traces development of Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) XXI and the newly developed Career Field Designation (CFD) system. It describes the impact these changes have made on the promotion system and selection to senior level schools. It concludes with recommendations for selection of future Army officers.



## THE U. S. ARMY OFFICER CORPS: CHANGING WITH THE TIMES

Commissioned Officers are the leaders of the Army. They lead Soldiers during every aspect of a mission. Commissioned Officers make decisions quickly, always focusing on completing the mission successfully, and showing respect for their subordinates. Commissioned Officers lead from the front and adjust to environments that are always changing. To be a Commissioned Officer is to be respected as a Soldier, an inspiring leader and a servant of the Nation.<sup>1</sup>

- [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com)

As the above quote states, U. S. Army Officers possess strong values, leadership skills, and a “follow me” leadership attitude. However, the Army officer corps has endured many challenges and changes over the years. Although many may believe that progress has come slowly in some areas, evolutionary change in selection, promotion, and retention of officers has strengthened the Army and produced better leaders over time. As with any large successful organization, the Army has adapted to changing circumstances in order to develop today’s effective officer corps. This SRP analyses the evolution of the Army officer corps by tracing the historical development of the current corps. It then projects how future challenges may require further evolution of the corps and concludes with recommendations for selecting the right officers to meet these challenges.

Before we look ahead, we should first consider the historical background from which the current Army officer corps emerged. In terms of race, gender, and social class, the current diverse officer corps began to emerge in the mid-1940s. Immediately following the Allied victory in World War II, President Harry S. Truman and the War Department (later known as Department of Defense [DOD]) leaders assured that qualified minorities would integrate into the officer corps. This initiative paved the way for several minority officers to enjoy distinguished military careers.

However, their successes fell victim to the anti-militarism generated by widespread opposition to the Vietnam War in the 1960s. Indeed Martin Luther King, Jr.’s protests of the war brought into disfavor the very institution that had first welcomed minority Soldiers into its senior leadership, the U. S. military. Furthermore, the revived draft to support the war discriminated against economically and socially deprived groups, thereby tarnishing the image of the military.

By the 1980s, the U. S. military was rebuilding in recovery from the Vietnam War as the Cold War continued. A new all-volunteer U. S. military emerged, and the positive image of the military was slowly restored. Minorities joined the all-volunteer force in substantial numbers,

and the post-Vietnam officer corps included many talented minority and female officers, several of whom had served in Vietnam.

As the Cold War ended successfully with the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the officer corps of the new all-volunteer military faced another crisis: a dramatic drawdown in the wake of the so-called peace dividends of the Cold War victory. Which officers would the Army retain? How would the drawdown affect the diversity of the officer corps? Would the corps' morale be adversely affected by the drawdown?

The characteristics of the current officer corps provide some answers to these questions. From the drawdown period evolved the current Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) XXI Task Force (TF) development era. OPMS XXI helped to rebalance the force after the drawdown period and to select and grow an effective 21<sup>st</sup> Century officer corps. As part of OPMS XXI, the Career Field Designation (CFD) system assured that sufficient numbers of qualified officers would be available in all Army functional areas. In addition, OPMS XXI changed the promotion system and affected the ways Army Officers are educated and trained.

Just as the officers corps changed dramatically following World War II, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War, it is changing now to meet the challenges of the Global War on Terrorism. Undoubtedly, it will continue to change as new threats emerge. The Army's methods of selecting, training, and retaining its officers will be critically important in sustaining the Army's ability to support the national strategy.

This SRP concludes with recommendations on how DOD and senior military leaders should assure that the U. S. military acquire the right officer corps for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Our leaders' past successes in maintaining an effective officer corps offer hope for the future. Their foresight and creative thinking has served the nation well. This SRP seeks to contribute to the nation's on-going successful adaptations to changing circumstances in order to select and retain an effective Army officer corps.

#### Historical View

##### Diversity in the U. S. Army Officer Corps

By the end of World War II, our national leaders concluded that our armed forces would be more effective if they were racially integrated. They assumed that an integrated force could more effectively defend a culturally, socially, and racially divided democratic nation. Blacks, Women, and Hispanics then broke into the officer ranks, but the road to get there was not an easy one. In the 1940s and earlier, the U. S. Army did not depart significantly from the disparate treatment and segregation characteristic of American society at that time. Instead of

always leading by example, sometimes the Army turned a blind eye on the nation's inequities. However, over time the Army eventually took the lead in treating all members fairly and in abandoning racial segregation of the force.

#### Black Officers

During the 1940s, black men were underrepresented in the Army officer ranks, compared with their numbers of enlisted personnel or representation in the civilian labor force.<sup>2</sup> Although black men participated in every major U.S. war, the battle for integration and for recognition of the accomplishments of black officers was waged slowly. It was not until after World War II, under a 1948 executive order (E.O. 9981) by then President Truman that the total U.S. Armed Forces began to be integrated.<sup>3</sup> At the beginning, much of the progress was on paper only: Real integration proceeded slowly. DOD leaders defended the 1948 executive order, and the Army was fully integrated by 1954. Following the executive order, the Supreme Court ruled on whether facilities provided for blacks and whites were equal, not on whether the separation of the races itself was unconstitutional.<sup>4</sup> Potential black officers entered the Army under a quota system and received officer basic training in segregated units. However, once they graduated they were assigned to non-segregated units and provided with integrated housing, eating arrangements, and social gatherings. Prior to 1948, Army policies regarding Black Army Officers stipulated that:

- Black officer candidates would be held to the same standard as whites.
- As commissioned officers, they could command only black troops.
- Black officers would be assigned only to Reserve, National Guard, and service units.<sup>5</sup>

Additionally, the Black Army officers faced problems within the black community when it came to leading their black enlisted soldiers. Maintaining proper military order was difficult. Many black enlisted and non-commissioned soldiers realized that black Army officers were not treated equally by white Army officers. Although these soldiers resented this discrimination, they did not fully respect their black officers simply because they perceived that the Army itself did not fully respect them. This obviously did nothing to help the fortunes of black Army Officers and only confirmed in the minds of some DOD Army policy makers that black Army Officers could not lead.<sup>6</sup> Even in the few instances in which black Army Officers were senior to white Army Officers in the same higher headquarters, it was perfectly clear in practice that no black Army Officer, regardless of grade, would be superior to the most junior white Army Officer.<sup>7</sup> This was because many white Army officers still resented black Army officers' progress and

commitment to the profession. When mixed black and white Army Officer staffs were formed, leadership problems appeared even when the staff worked effectively.<sup>8</sup>

According to the Defense Manpower Data Center, in the early 1940s there were 7,768 Black commissioned officers – representing less than one percent of blacks in the Army.<sup>9</sup> Given the wartime circumstances and threat to national survival, these problems seem insolvable. While DOD debated about whether black men should be officers and serve in leadership roles, the black community did not stand idly by. Black community leaders of the 1940s, such as Grant Reynolds and A. Philip Randolph, helped formed an organization (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP]) to end all discrimination and segregation based on race, color, creed, or national origin.<sup>10</sup> This organization formed not just to assist the military but, also to help all men and women of color achieve equal and fair treatment in America.

DOD leaders were thus faced with a real challenge: Allow more black men to enter the military and totally integrate the officer corps, or risk the chance that white officers would totally rebel and thereby precipitate an uprising. DOD decided to assume the risk and took major steps forward by creating the first all-black military aviation program at Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University).<sup>11</sup> This was part of the Army Air Corps. Furthermore, to integrate the officer corps, the War Department merged a black and white regiment to form the U. S. Army Fourth Cavalry Brigade, which later was led by the Army's first black general, Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis, Sr.<sup>12</sup> But this single example does not indicate that black Army officers have not had their share of problems since the 1950s. However, since this initial effort to integrate the officer corps, one black Army Officer has made the greatest achievement of all minorities: In 1989, General (Ret) Colin Powell was youngest and first black Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. A 2001 study by DOD indicated blacks represented 12 percent of the officer corps. In 2003, the percentage increased to 13 percent. Although slow, the study indicates the percentage is rising.

#### Women Officers

Another challenge DOD and senior military strategy leaders confronted was allowing women in the military, especially as officers. Like black Army officers, women have participated in one way or another in every major U.S. war. Likewise, opportunities for women to be accepted were very slow to develop and came with specific limitations, as with black Army officers. When DOD and senior military leaders considered the progress of women Army Officers in the military as compared to blacks, they uncovered somewhat different issues in

career progression. Whereas equal opportunity and treatment were the consensual goals in the case of black Army Officers, the debate within the DOD community focused on the appropriate roles for women (officers and enlisted) in the military.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout military history, the white male-dominated U. S. Army culture offered little or no experience in working side-by-side with women. Again, like the black community, women continue to fight for equal opportunities in the military. Because of their continuing efforts, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) (1942) and the Women's Army Corps (1948) were established. These two organizations were the starting point for women in the military and provided opportunities for women to become officers. Initially, their primary mission was to provide the U. S. Army with a small group of well-trained women who could serve during mobilization as a cadre to train thousands of women volunteers.<sup>14</sup> This mission was achieved in an outstanding manner.

Although their work was flawless, the War Department placed restrictions on their service:<sup>15</sup>

- Could not engage in combat duties.
- Could not be promoted above lieutenant colonel.
- Could not command men (white or black).
- Could not get military credit for serving in the WAAC (i.e. no retirement benefits).

As the fight continued for equal rights for women, a breakthrough occurred in 1972. DOD and senior military leaders authorized more roles for women officers. In 1972, DOD gave military women credit for their service in the WAAC and allowed women to be promoted above the grade of lieutenant colonel.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, a change in Army regulations in 1973 permitted women to command men, except in combat units. Then in 1976, women were allowed to enter the U. S. Army Military Academy (West Point).<sup>17</sup> Subsequently, in 1976, Anna Mae Hays, Army Nurse Corps, and Elizabeth P. Hoisington, Director of the Women Army Corps, became the Army's first female brigadier general officers.<sup>18</sup>

These and other policy changes over the years have eliminated most of the career obstacles and assignment restrictions for females. However, women Army officers and enlisted Soldiers are still subject to combat restrictions. Today's female Army Officer leaders continue to deliberate with DOD and senior military leaders to try to level the playing field between the two genders. Women officers are currently restricted from about 30 percent of U. S. Army jobs, mostly in the combat arms branches.<sup>19</sup>

## Hispanic & Other Minority Officers

According to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Personnel and Readiness, minorities other than black officers – including those of Hispanic descents, Native Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and others – have suffered through many of the same exclusionary practices that affected black officers throughout the years.<sup>20</sup> Hispanics represent six percent of the officer corps.

In 2000, the Puerto Rico Herald reported that the Hispanic-American population was growing and was about to become the largest minority group in the country. However, Hispanic-Americans are critically underrepresented in the U.S. Army's officer corps.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, it appears that the Hispanic community views opportunities in the military as coming exclusively in the enlisted ranks. Why is this? One reason could be the lack of knowledge about the military. It could also be the lack of Hispanics attending college. In 2001, 1.4 million Hispanics attended college, while whites enjoyed a 22.1 million rate the same year. Also, it could be the cultural attitude within traditional Hispanic families. As a military fellow at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Research, Colonel Hector Topete wrote and suggests that Hispanic teen-agers tend to drop out of high school at disproportionate rates as compared to white teen-agers.<sup>22</sup> This may be due to the desire for many Hispanics to go to work rather than acquire a higher education. Regarding cultural attitudes, Colonel Topete suggests that several older and traditional Hispanic families have issues with Hispanics, especially women, joining the U. S. Army. Such reservation may emanate from their parents' perception that the U. S. Army is not a respectable place for a woman to work.<sup>23</sup>

These mind sets and attitudes have changed over the years, but not to a degree that Hispanics consider military service as highly desirable. Education is the key to success in any culture. In this case, educating Hispanic, Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander parents and youths will help. In response to this problem, DOD employs a far-reaching strategy to appeal to Hispanics, Native Americans, and the Asian/Pacific Islanders -- from partnering with civic groups to running advertisements directed at young people as well as adults in a position to influence their decisions, to sponsoring stay-in-school campaigns.<sup>24</sup>

Is this enough? Hispanic, Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander Army officers, past and present should play a role in sharing awareness of their successful military careers. For some, over the years their success has been great, although their numbers are small. Consider the following exemplary careers:

- General (ret) Theodore S. Kanamine, first Japanese-American to achieve the rank of a brigadier general (1976) in the U. S. Army <sup>25</sup>
- General (Ret) Richard E. Cavazos, the first Hispanic to attain the rank of brigadier (1976) and the first Hispanic four-star general (1982) <sup>26</sup>
- Lieutenant General Ricardo S. Sánchez, currently the highest-ranking Hispanic in the U.S. Army and only the ninth Hispanic general in the history of the U. S. Army <sup>27</sup>
- Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Consuelo Castillo Kickbusch, the highest-ranking Hispanic woman (1996) in the Combat Support Field in the United States Army <sup>28</sup>
- Brigadier General Larry C. Newman, currently the only Native American general officer on active duty, assigned at the Pentagon <sup>29</sup>
- General (Ret) Eric K. Shinseki, the first Asian/Pacific Islander Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army (June 1999 – June 2003) <sup>30</sup>
- All currently on active duty, Major Generals Jason K. Kamiya, Joseph F. Peterson and Antonio M. Taguba are Asian/Pacific Islanders. By date of rank, Major General Kamiya is the highest ranking active duty Asian/Pacific Islander and Commanding General, U. S. Army Southern European Task Force (Airborne), Joint Task Force-76, OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), Afghanistan <sup>31</sup>

All of these examples show how far the Army Officer Corps has come in achieving total diversity. As mentioned earlier, progress in diversifying the officers corps came slowly, but without President Truman's 1948 Executive Order to assure equality in the treatment of all persons in the military, regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin, followed by the 1971 Defense Race Relations Institute, later re-named the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, to advise the government and carry out training in equal opportunity, none of this would have occurred. <sup>32</sup>

No other country in the world would go to such measures to ensure their armed forces adequately reflect the diversity and culture of its society. DOD and U. S. Army leaders understood that diversity in the military contributes to political stability and national solidarity. Nonetheless, characteristics of the officers corps are subject to significant on-going socio-economic and geo-political changes <sup>33</sup> Currently, DOD and U. S. Army leaders seem to have a clear picture of what the U.S. Army officer corps should look like -- a group of multiethnic professionals. <sup>34</sup>

### Vietnam Era Army Officer

The Vietnam War profoundly affected the Army officers corps. Following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and assassinations of such community leaders as Martin Luther King, Jr., the war became very unpopular. Indeed, many influential Americans, including minority leaders, publicly opposed the war. The ensuing anti-militarism eroded the image of the officers corps. An entire generation of the Army officer Corps suffered the agony of the Vietnam War.<sup>35</sup> Racial tensions due to social pressures permeated all Army units. Morale plummeted. Among the 6,598 officers killed in the war, 59 percent were Army officers. And ninety-one percent of these Army officers were warrant officers, second lieutenants, first lieutenants or captains.<sup>36</sup> To compound the problem, after the United States withdrew from the war, Congress moved quickly to downsize the military and cut funding. The U. S. Army quickly became a "hollow force" with inadequate troops, training, and equipment.<sup>37</sup> There was no money to modernize weapons or equipment, and enormous funds had been allocated to pay for the war. So the post-Vietnam War units lacked resources for Soldiers, training, and equipment. How would the Army officers corps be restored?

Officers like Major General (Ret) Robert H. Scales (then a captain, and former Commandant, U.S. Army War College) and other young officers persisted in reforming the officer corps and restoring the image of the Army.<sup>38</sup> Major General (Ret) Scales recalled that "he and other veterans who stayed in the Army helped rebuild the shattered force over a period of 15 years; and today Vietnam's legacy permeates the military worldview."<sup>39</sup> They responded proactively, rather than lamenting their losses. But they also tried to learn the hard lessons from those losses. They reconfigured themselves into a force prepared to fight the kinds of wars that they were most comfortable with. In future conflicts, general officers would be in control, not politicians. They would fight decisive, winning conflicts, not just engage in endless mucking around in jungles and rice paddies. In these conflicts, the moral stakes would be clear. Therefore the military would enjoy popular support from the America people. The bottom line was to help rebuild the forces and to re-establish the notion of war as an autonomous sphere of activity over which officers would preside.<sup>40</sup> This notion to rebuild the force was for all who served (white, black, women and other). As a result, all have benefited.

### Cold War Era Army Officer

The Army and the officer corps saw their efforts turn the corner in the early 1980s as new money poured in for equipment, pay, and college benefits. During the Cold War the Army Officer Corps status was restored in American society. Funding from President Ronald

Reagan's administration came at the right time. Senior military officers focused on warfighting. They addressed the clear threat of the Soviet Union while restoring post-Vietnam U. S. military competence.<sup>41</sup> Further, the Officer Corps helped rebuild the non-commissioned corps and emphasized teaching young troops to handle the complex new weaponry, an initiative that came to be called the "training revolution."<sup>42</sup>

#### U. S. Army Officer Corps Drawdown Period (1980s – 1990s)

However, Cold War ended abruptly with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. DOD then quickly reduced the number of U. S. Army officers on active duty by 23 percent between 1989 and 1996.<sup>43</sup> The strategy was to reduce the force to the size and configuration needed to engage the post-Cold War enemy the United States thought it would face. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, DOD felt that the U. S. Army would never again face an enemy the size of the Soviet Union. Personnel managers then faced three challenges:

- To select a limited number of new officers in each year to ensure the Army would have a vigorous, combat-ready force in the future;
- To retain, to the extent possible, officers already in the force who had pursued successful careers and planned their finances on the expectation of continued military service;
- To distribute the reductions in a way that maintained a desirable occupational mix.<sup>44</sup>

To balance the supply of Army officers to match the required force profile, DOD devised a variety of personnel management tools: the voluntary separation incentive (VSI), special separation benefit (SSB), and the temporary early retirement authorization (at the 15<sup>th</sup> year mark).<sup>45</sup> As the drawdown proceeded, it was unclear whether a sufficient number of officers would leave voluntarily. However, from 1991 to 1996, about 2,200 officers took advantage of VSI or SSB, and more than three times as many, 7,500 officers, took the early retirement incentive.<sup>46</sup>

In the early days of the drawdown, DOD leaders were concerned that the careers of black, women, and minority officers would be affected. One reason for their concern was that so much work and effort in the past had gone into ensuring the officer ranks was a diversity group; another concern was the possible negative reaction the drawdown would have on the general population. To mitigate these issues, during the drawdown there was a continuing effort to recruit more minority officers.<sup>47</sup> Accordingly, the proportion of white officers fell while the proportions of all minority groups rose during this period.<sup>48</sup>

Although the drawdown was viewed as successful, it led to an Officer Corps that was more senior in both years of service and grade. Also, it increased the proportion of the officer corps with medical specialties and reduced the proportion with combat skills.<sup>49</sup> After the drawdown, DOD and senior military leaders were again challenged to rebalance the officer corps.

#### Current Army Officer Era

##### Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) XXI

Knowing why, when, and how to change is critical to maintaining an effective Army Officer Corps. OPMS XXI was designed to try to restructure and balance the Army officer corps and to create a "win-win" system for the individual officer and the Army after the drawdown period, going into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.<sup>50</sup> Faced with an unbalanced force in 1997, General Dennis J. Reimer, then Chief of Staff of the Army, recognized the need to review the Army's Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS). To redress the unbalanced force (especially the Army officer corps), a Study Task Force was charged to realign the force for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Study Task Force's mission was:<sup>51</sup>

- To improve the personnel management and leader development systems, while increasing soldier stability and readiness;
- To integrate concurrent leader development, character development, and turbulence reduction initiatives;
- To implement strategy that attracts senior leader support and provides a mechanism for periodic reviews and updates the status of the officers corps.

After a year of deliberation, the Study Task Force made recommendations that would change the way the Army develops and trains its officers, providing greater specialization in all warfighting tasks. The Study Task Force made the following recommendations:<sup>52</sup>

- Implement career fields, with distinct groupings of branches and functional areas, to reflect the evolving needs of the current and future Army;
- Establish several new relevant functional areas;
- Assign all Army Competitive Category officers to a career field after selection for promotion to major
- Limit officers' competition for promotion to lieutenant colonel and colonel only to other officers in their career fields;
- Educate all officers promoted to major in resident MEL 4.

As this historical review indicates, the Army officer corps has evolved in response to a succession of challenges. However, the post-Cold War efforts to balance the corps led to extraordinary efforts to improve the corps' overall capabilities for warfighting. The establishment of the Career Field Designation (CFD) system was designed to build an officer corps that would be skilled in combined arms operations in a joint and multinational environment and fully trained in the technical applications that support the Army's large systemic needs.<sup>53</sup> Despite some pushback from DOD and some senior military officers, General Reimer concurred with the Study Task Forces recommendations. Although, the goal was to help reshape the total Army, OPMS XXI especially helped black, women and Hispanic officers.

#### Career Field Designation (CFD) System

In response to one Study Task Force recommendation, the Army established four career fields with relevant functional areas:<sup>54</sup>

- Operations Career Field (OP CF): The Operations Career Field focuses on functions associated with training for and executing Army Vision 2010, Patterns of Operations (Decisive Operations, Shape the Battlespace, Protect the Force, Support the Force, as well as the core process of training the Operational Force to Maintain, Sustain Land Operations and Acquire and Sustain Infrastructure). OP CF includes all 16 basic branches (Air Defense, Armor, Aviation, Field Artillery, Infantry, Special Force, Chemical Corps, Engineers, Military Intelligence, Military Police, Signal Corps, Adjutant General Corps, Finance Corps, Ordnance Corps, Quartermaster Corps and Transportation Corps) and two functional areas: multi-functional logistics (FA 90) and Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs (FA 39). This Career Field offers both battalion and brigade level command opportunities.
- Operational Support Career Field (OS CF): Operational Support promotes the building of Army systems for the future, performs the core process of acquiring and sustaining infrastructure, and performs emerging strategic missions. This career field includes the functional areas of the Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) (FA51) and the Foreign Area Officers (FA 48).
- Information Operations Career Field (IO CF): Information Operations promotes information dominance and contributes to the emerging strategic information operation missions. It manages and employs "information" to accomplish both Army Vision 2010 Patterns of Operations, including information dominance and shaping the battlespace, and core processes such as information management operational and institutional

requirements within Army, Joint, and DoD organizations. It contains several functional areas: Information Systems Engineering (FA24), Information Operations (FA30), Strategic Intelligence (FA34), Space Operations (FA40), Public Affairs (FA46), Automation Systems (FA53), and Simulation Operations (FA57).

- Institutional Support Career Field (IS CF): Institutional Support promotes, defends, secures, manages, and supports Army programs, resources, and requirements for DoD and Congress, while managing and operating the institutions of the Army. The career field is composed of several functional areas: Human Resource Management (FA43), Comptroller (FA45), USMA Permanent Professor Program (FA47), Operations Research/Systems Analysis (ORSA) (FA49), Force Management (FA50), Nuclear Weapons (FA52), Strategic Plans and Policy (FA59).

In Digital War: A View from the Frontline, Major Donald Vandergriff claims that, by moving out of the old command track – which is now a new operational field – into one of the three other fields, all officers who reach the grade of major have an equal chance to advance to the highest ranks.<sup>55</sup> The new career field options now enable officers throughout their careers to serve in a variety of assignments centered on their branch and functional areas and to remain competitive for successive promotions. Since many black, women, and Hispanic officers are not serving in combat arms branches, this opportunity rendered assistance to help all that wanted to continue their military careers.

#### New Officer Promotion System under OPMS XXI

Job performance, education, the completion of military training, and the potential for further service have always been the criteria for promotion to the next rank. These fundamental promotion criteria remain valid for Army Officers under OPMS XXI. However, under OPMS XXI, majors and lieutenant colonels can now compete for promotion from within their career field, not more broadly within their basic branches.

Under this new system, promotion opportunities to lieutenant colonel and colonel for officers serving in the, IO CF, IS CF, and OS CF will increase significantly. These officers do not have to command brigades or battalions, as did traditional OP CF officers. However, OPMS XXI's long-term goal is to eventually enable well-qualified specialists to be selected as general officers, destroying the myth that command experience is essential to high-level advancement.<sup>56</sup> This cultural shift will allow excellent officers the opportunity to advance to higher ranks throughout their careers.

## Educating Army Officers

Military education will always be Army officers' vehicle for career advancement. The Army has always trained and educated its officers in the latest doctrine and to the highest of standards. OPMS XXI and Goldwater-Nichols Act hastened reform of the officer corps educational system. Army officers can no longer simply attend their branch officer basic course and report to their first duty station ready to lead troops. In compliance with OPMS XXI, the Army plans to implement three high-payoff institutional training and education initiatives for lieutenants, captains, and majors by the 3rd quarter, FY06.<sup>57</sup>

At the lieutenant level, the Army will initiate the three stages of the Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC). These three stages are equal for all (white, black, women, Hispanic and other) and should weed out all weak lieutenants.

- BOLC I: a tough, standardized, small unit leadership experience that flows from pre-commissioning.
- BOLC II: initial field leadership experience
- BOLC III: branch technical/tactical training<sup>58</sup>

After lieutenants complete these three stages, the Army expects to produce a corps of mature, confident, and competent lieutenants who share a common professional bond with their combined arms peers. With this common bond, they will be ready to report to their first duty station ready to lead troops.

Normally, at the captain level officers attend advanced courses for their branch. In the future at the captain level, two courses are envisioned: The Combined Arms Staff Course for staff officers and the Combined Arms Battle Command Course for company commanders.<sup>59</sup> Both courses will capitalize on advanced distributed learning and new high impact resident training methods, such as multi-echelon, combined arms exercises.<sup>60</sup> As at the lieutenant level, this will ensure all captains share a common bond and have received the same level of training.

The third high-payoff institutional training and education initiative is offered to majors. Intermediate Level Education (ILE) will be provided for all Army majors. ILE is designed to provide a high quality, tailored education to majors who are grounded in warfighting doctrine and who have the technical, tactical, and leadership competencies and skills to be successful in their field, branch, or functional area.<sup>61</sup> Bottom line: This type of training should prepare officers for their next ten years of service. There are both upsides and downsides to this program: The upside is that for the first time the Army will attempt to ensure that all mid-grade officers have the same level of military education. The downside is that this schooling will take many mid-grade majors from the field, leaving their duties to senior captains and senior non-commissioned

officers. However, accepting the risk to educate these officers and improve their abilities to conduct full-spectrum operations in joint, interagency, and multinational environments and develop the competencies required to serve successfully as staff officers at division level and above is one DoD is willing to take.<sup>62</sup> At this point, the officer's career should be on a path for a success. Also at this point, the officer should seek self education (i.e... pursue master degrees or doctoral degrees).

The Army War College will continue to educate Army colonels and senior lieutenant colonels. As always, the Army War College will inform senior officer corps about the large military and strategic issues that confront America. Above all, the Army War College should broaden the intellectual and military horizons of senior Army officers, introducing them to the larger strategic and operational issues that confront our military and our nation.<sup>63</sup>

#### Possible Future Challenges

Evolution of the Army officers corps over the past six decades has strengthened the Army, the military community, and the nation. Despite slow progress in some areas, this evolution has successfully yielded a solid professional officer corps, supported by a productive professional education program. DOD and U. S. Army leaders have pursued one overarching goal: to create the best officer corps ever. Without proper responses to the above challenges, it is likely that the Army officer corps would not be where it is today. So what is the next big challenge for the Army Officer Corps? The Army and DOD already have plans to improve the educational system of the Army officer corps. Is this enough? Will this ensure that newly commissioned officers, captains, and majors are trained properly to fight the Global War on Terrorism? Does DOD currently have a problem in retaining junior and mid-career officers who are leaving the Army because of current operational tempo? What new challenges can the Army Officer Corps expect in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? What is the best approach to handle them?

#### Recommendations for Possible Future Challenges for the Army Officers

The training plan that the Army has developed is somewhat on track. However, preparation of future Army officers must begin early, well before the officer accession point. Officer education should begin at the cadet level. We are currently fighting a non-traditional war. The earlier their training begins, the better the officers will be. Once cadets are committed through contract to join the Army (usually their junior year), DOD should ensure the U. S. Military Academy, universities and colleges' Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs focus cadets learning on foreign languages, international relations, comparative religions and

cultures, and warfighting at the strategic level. Early education in these areas will improve the quality of newly commissioned Army officers and prepare them to succeed in the “long war”.

The next challenging area could be retaining junior and mid-career officers who are returning from back-to-back combat tours. Young officers who are looking ahead to repeated combat tours, along with years away from their families and prospects of a war that could last for decades, may be looking for other options. Could this be another Vietnam? Is so, many officers may foresee it is a future they want no part of. If this is true, what should DOD do to retain these officers?

To continue to fight the “long war”, DOD should restructure its retirement plan. Currently, officers cannot retire until their twentieth year of service. If the officers were allowed to retire at any time after their tenth year, they would be more inclined to continue their service. Further, the Army should commission and place on active duty as many qualified cadets as it can. Thus there will be a ready supply of young officers to replace departing senior lieutenants and captains.

The last plausible challenge for the Army officer corps is the uncertain future of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Army officer corps will probably face four types of military threats in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: information attacks; nuclear, biological and chemical attacks; attacks from rogue and hostile nations on the U. S. and its allies; and terrorists attacks. To counter these potential threats, the Army officer corps is already on the cutting edge of engaging in a new way of warfighting. The current modernization strategy calls for fielding a full corps with information technology by 2010.<sup>64</sup> If modernization proceeds on schedule, the Army officers corps will be well-prepared to counter the complex threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### Overall Recommendations for the Army Officer

As this historical analysis reveals, the Army officer corps has evolved continuously into a viable professional military asset. As Army leadership looks to the future, how can it better adapt to sustain the fight and win the “long war”? OPMS XXI was a great start. However, the Army officer corps cannot rely on this single initiative. To enhance the overall U. S. Army of the future, the Army must sustain several initiatives: Continue to pursue capable officer candidates; develop flexible doctrine; structure and operate the right modular forces; participate in joint and multinational forces; adapt to unforeseen circumstances; and take full advantage of shared, real time situational awareness.<sup>65</sup> Bottom line: These are the types of officers needed for the “long war”.

- **Quality Soldiers:** Army officers must never forget that quality Soldiers will remain as critically important in the 21st century as they are today. Intelligent, physically fit, highly motivated, educated, and well-trained Soldiers will be required to leverage technology to its full potential.
- **Flexible Doctrine:** The future strategic environment will require a responsive military for operations across the entire continuum of conflict--from war, to lesser conflicts, to peace operations. Army officers must be able to apply principles in ways as varied as the scenarios encountered. Using flexible doctrine, Army officers will be able to adapt tactics, techniques, procedures, and organizations to meet future requirements.
- **Ability and Modularity:** Army officers need to understand that the 21st century force will be modular in structure to facilitate tailoring of necessary force packages. Modular forces will facilitate the generation, projection, and sustainment of appropriate force packages for any contingency.
- **Joint & Multinational Connectivity:** Successful execution of operations throughout the battlespace demands the use of all service assets. Political and military considerations will require that most operations involve many nations and agencies. The ability to pass information unhindered among the elements of the joint or multinational force will be essential. Likewise, the operational systems of all elements must be compatible.
- **Versatility:** Staying trained and ready to fight and win remains the Army's absolute priority. Army officers must be able to conduct capabilities-based operations and missions across the continuum of conflict. Future military operations will be characterized by their diversity and complexity.
- **Shared Situational Awareness:** Army officers must be able to transmit and respond to precise communications among all echelons of the force to sustain situational awareness and capitalize on the agility of the force.

### Conclusion

This SRP provides a historical overview of the Army officer corps. It describes how blacks, women, Hispanics, and other minorities entered the officer corps. These groups overcame many obstacles to rise to the highest ranks. During the Vietnam era, the officer corps suffered along with the Army and the nation. The agony of losing the first war in U. S. history left some Army officers determined to ensure the U. S. Army and the nation would not endure another similar ordeal. Better Soldiers, equipment, and training became available during the Cold War period, enabling growth of the Army officers corps as part of one of the strongest

military forces in the world. Offering training, education, leadership roles and pay incentives, 1980s ROTC programs at universities and colleges had no problem with recruiting. Newly commissioned second lieutenants sought active duty assignments, rather than National Guard or Army Reserves billets. Then the Cold War ended and DOD and senior military officers were faced with too many officers and budget constraints. This led to the historical Drawdown Period when the force was too large for the perceived threat.

The Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) XXI Task Force was tasked to develop a comprehensive review of the Army Officer systems. Following its year-long study, it recommended changes to the entire system including implementation of career fields, adjustments in the promotion system, and new education requirements.

As in the past, the Army officer corps is changing to meet emerging challenges. Currently engaged in the Global War on Terrorism, Army officers remain focused and continue to train professionally. Future officers will conduct simultaneous, continuous, and seamless operations across the full spectrum of military activities. Army Officers should commit to forging an "Army after Next" that has the capabilities to execute a broad range of missions to meet the challenges of an uncertain world.<sup>66</sup> With the diversity and culture awareness of our senior military leaders, the Army will continue to success well into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> About the Army; Commissioned Officer, available from <http://www.goarmy.com>; Internet; accessed 18 November 2005

<sup>2</sup> David R. Segal and Mady W. Segal, "America Military Population," December 2004, available from <http://www.prb.org>; Internet; accessed 18 November 2005

<sup>3</sup> Elissa Haney, "Blacks in the Military," 2005 Pearson Education, Inc., available from <http://www.infoplease.com>; Internet; accessed 18 November 2005

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Black Officers in World War II, available from <http://www.deaix.osd.mil>; Internet; accessed 18 November 2005

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Alan M. Osur, "Black-White Relations in the U. S. Military 1940-1972," available from <http://www.airpowermaxwell.af.mil>; Internet; accessed 19 November 2005

<sup>10</sup> Haney.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Officer of the Under Secretary of Defense Personnel and Readiness, "Career Progression of Minority and Women Officer," DoD, page 4.

<sup>14</sup> Bettie J. Morden, "The Women's Army Corps 1945-1978" Center Of Military History United States Army, 1989, (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C), page 5.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., page 124

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., page 269

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., page 323

<sup>18</sup> Officer of the Under Secretary, page 3.

<sup>19</sup> Officer of the Under Secretary, page 4.

<sup>20</sup> Rowan Scarborough "Hispanic Officers Sought By Army", Puerto Rico Herald, January 5, 2000

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Donna Miles, "DoD Aim to Attract More Hispanics To Its Work Force, October 12, 2004, available from <http://www.defenselink.mil>; Internet; accessed 1 December 2005

<sup>25</sup> Officer of the Under Secretary, page 4.

<sup>26</sup> Hispanic-American in the U. S. Army, available from <http://www.army.mil/hispanicamericans>; Internet; accessed 6 January 2006

<sup>27</sup> Solider Of Fortune "Hispanic of the Year", available from <http://www.hispanicomline.com>; Internet; accessed 6 January 2006

<sup>28</sup> Army Vet, available from <http://www.kepplespeakers.com>; Internet; accessed 6 January 2006

<sup>29</sup> GOMO, available from <http://www.army.mil>; Internet; accessed 6 January 2006

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Multiethnic Armed Forces, available from <http://www.dcaf.com>; Internet; accessed 8 January 2006

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Paul Richter, "The Vietnam Conflict", April 10, 2000, available from <http://www.deanza.fhda.edu>; Internet; accessed 10 January 2006

<sup>36</sup> Vietnam War Facts, available from <http://www.vietnam-war.info/facts>; Internet; accessed 11 January 2006

<sup>37</sup> James Carafano, "Vietnam (Hallow Force)", Heritage Foundation, January 25, 2005, available from <http://www.foxnews.com>; Internet; accessed 10 January 2006

<sup>38</sup> Richter

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Justin Raimondo, "The Thirty Year War (Vietnam We're Fighting Over It)", April 29, 2005, available from <http://www.antiwar.com/justin/articleid=5770>; Internet; accessed 10 January 2006.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Dan Crippen, "The Drawdown of the Military Officer Corps", November 1999, preface section

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, Section 2

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, Section 2

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, Section 4

<sup>47</sup> Officer of the Under Secretary, page 12.

<sup>48</sup> Officer of the Under Secretary, page 12.

<sup>49</sup> Crippen, Section 5

<sup>50</sup> OPMS XXI: "What Does It Mean For The Future", June 1997, available from <http://www.faoa.org>; Internet; accessed 13 January 2006

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

<sup>52</sup> United State Army Web Page, Career Field Designation Policy, June 13 2005, available from <http://www.us.army.mil/per/msg/05-175>; Internet; accessed 19 December 2005

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Donald Vandergriff, "Digital War: A View from the Frontline", Section; The Fifth Period, The Officer Corps of the Future, available from <http://www.d-n-i.net>; Internet; accessed 4 January 2006

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Military Education Network, "Changes Approved to Officer Education System", September 25 2004, available from <http://www.militaryedu.com>; Internet; accessed 26 October 2005

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> Ibid

<sup>62</sup> Army Commissioned Officer Career Information Home Page, available from <http://usmilitary.about.com/library/milinfo/>; Internet; accessed 1 November 2005

<sup>63</sup> Williamson Murray, "Grading the War Colleges," *The National Interest*, no. 6 (Winter 1986–87), pages 12–19.

<sup>64</sup> America's Army; "Tomorrow and Into The 21st Century, available from <http://www.army.mil/aps/97/ch5>; Internet; accessed 5 January 2006

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> America's Army; "Into the 21st Century", available from <http://www.army.mil/aps/98/ch5>; Internet; accessed 7 January 2006